

bird held by a thread attached to its legs to flutter about. This is a practice which is still one of the commonest acts of the daily cruelty to animals witnessed in Italy, and has consequently occupied thoughtless human creatures at least since the time of the Etruscan people, which loses itself in the obscurity of an unknown past.—*Archiv für Naturgeschichte*, xlvii. (1881) pp. 514–516.

*Note on some obscure Points in the Organization and Development of the Echinorhynchi.* By M. MÉGNIN.

The *Echinorhynchi* are generally regarded as entirely destitute of a mouth and digestive organs. M. Lespés has described what he thought was a digestive organ in the trunk of *Echinorhynchus gigas*; but his view has not been adopted by subsequent authors; and M. Mégnin thinks that the cavity that exists in the interior of the trunk is the result of a disposition rendered necessary by the alternate erection and retraction of the trunk, like the finger of a glove, frequently observed in these worms.

His own investigations have been pursued for several years upon different species of *Echinorhynchi*, both adult and in the state of encysted larvæ, obtained from fishes, reptiles, birds, and Cetacea; and he states that, although the cavity of the trunk may not be a digestive organ, such an organ nevertheless exists. In many *Echinorhynchi* there are two pyriform organs, which open at the base of the neck in the species which have not the trunk sessile, and at the base of the trunk in those which have no neck. These organs, called *menisei*, were regarded by Dujardin as a salivary apparatus; but all other helminthologists have confessed ignorance of their significance and function. In some encysted larvæ of *Echinorhynchi*, obtained from the cellular tissue of *Varani* and of a pheasant, the author found that these *menisei* filled the cavity of the body and opened at the base of the trunk in a large buccal pore with finely-folded lips. In a specimen of *Echinorhynchus brevicollis* from the whale the *menisei* were replaced by two long cylindrical tubes, opening into a furrow at the base of the trunk, and extending to the extremity of the body on each side of the generative organs. The interior of these tubes was lined with polygonal cells strongly impregnated with fat-globules of a reddish-yellow colour; and the author describes them as presenting a complete analogy with the bifid intestine of certain *Distoma*.

This intestine exists in the encysted larvæ of the *Echinorhynchi*, but is atrophied and represented only by the *menisei* in most of the adults, although, as above stated, it persists in some. The fact of the presence of a bifurcate intestine in the *Echinorhynchi* approximates those worms to the Trematoda, and removes them from the Nematoda, with which they have hitherto been classed.—*Comptes Rendus*, December 12, 1881, p. 1054.